

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2002-122

March 12, 2002

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
Investigation of WebNet Communications, Inc.

NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

Summary

Through this Notice, the Commission initiates an investigation into the practices of WebNet Communications, Inc. (WebNet).

Background

Since June 2001, the Commission has received more than 125 consumer complaints against WebNet. Maine consumers have complained that either WebNet changed their long distance telephone service without their authorization, or that they agreed to change their service but were not charged the rates promised and did not receive the incentives promised when they agreed to sign up with WebNet for long distance telephone service.

Upon preliminary investigation of the consumer complaints, the Commission's Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) issued violation citations to WebNet for:

- Failure to file revised rate schedules with the Commission at least 30 days before the effective date of a rate change.
- Charging fees that were not specified in its rate schedule filed with the Commission.
- Failure to follow its terms and conditions filed with the Commission.
- Failure to provide advance notice to customers of a rate increase.
- Failure to provide the CAD with information it requested during investigation of customer complaints.

Given the large number of complaints alleging unauthorized changes in telephone service by WebNet and the numerous violations of Maine law and Commission rules already identified by the CAD, a formal investigation is warranted.

Decision

The Commission hereby initiates an investigation, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1303(2), into the consumer complaints and violations of Maine law and Commission rules identified by the CAD and to determine WebNet's general compliance with Maine law and Commission rules. The Commission's investigation will also consider whether sanctions should be imposed if WebNet is found to have violated Maine law or rules. Such sanctions may include administrative penalties up to the maximum extent of the law and a revocation of WebNet's authority to provide telephone service in Maine.

WebNet is hereby made a party to this proceeding.

Any person who wishes to participate in this proceeding as a party must file a petition to intervene with the Commission's Administrative Director, Public Utilities Commission, 242 State Street, 18 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0018, by March 25, 2002. Petitions to intervene must be in writing and state the name and docket number of this proceeding and how the petitioner is affected by the proceeding. The petition should also include a short and plain statement of the nature and extent of the participation sought. Shortly after the deadline for petitions to intervene, the Commission will send to each proposed intervenor a copy of the service list in this case. Persons that wish to monitor the proceeding, but do not want to be a party, may request to be placed on the Commission's interested person list by contacting the Commission's Administrative Director at the same address listed above.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 12th day of March, 2002.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Dennis L. Keschl
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
Nugent
Diamond